

## Claims

1. A sequential mail sorting system for generating sort sequence codes, interpreting them for the sequential sorting of mail into a mail carrier walk sequence and providing for holdout mail types, comprising:
  - a. reading a sort plan text file for a selected postal delivery zone and determining the number of bins required in the sorting machine;
  - b. selecting the carriers whose routes are located in such zone;
  - c. generating sort sequence codes for sorting the mail in a sequential order; and
  - d. generating sequence codes for holdouts and regular mail types and placing them into a sort plan binary file.
2. A sequential mail sorting system as defined in claim 1, wherein the generating of sort sequence codes includes generating and interpreting sort sequence codes for holdout mail types to allow for sorting and removal of holdout mail from the mail sorting stream in the initial sorting pass of a multiple pass sequential mail sort.
3. A sequential mail sorting system as defined in claim 1, wherein the generating of sort sequence codes includes generating and interpreting sort sequence codes for holdout mail types to allow for sorting and removal of holdout mail from the mail sorting stream in the final sorting pass of a multiple pass sequential mail sort.

4. A sequential mail sorting system as defined in claim 2, wherein the generating of sort sequence codes further includes generating and interpreting sort sequence codes for holdout mail types to allow for sorting and removal of holdout mail from the mail sorting stream in the final sorting pass of a multiple pass sequential mail sort.

5. A sequential mail sorting system as defined in claim 1 further comprising providing a lookup procedure for hashing the sort plan binary file to allow for rapid lookup of the zip code and associated sort sequence codes included in the sort plan, whereby a sorting machine uses the sort sequence code to sort mail into an appropriate bin.

6. A sorting system as defined in claim 1 wherein the system is informed of the pass in which holdouts are to be offloaded and of the holdout special handling categories to be used in the offloading pass, and of the number of sequential sorting passes to be used.

7. A sorting system as defined in claim 4 further comprising providing a lookup procedure for hashing the sort plan binary file to allow for speedy lookup of the zip code and associated sort sequence codes included in the sort plan, whereby a sorting machine uses the sort sequence code to sort mail into an appropriate bin.